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# WITHIN REACH

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## **Describing the Decision-Making Process**

You are preparing your children to make one of the biggest decisions of their lives—the choice of career, or at least a first career! It's time to teach them how to make long-term decisions based on facts.

This page outlines one process for thoughtful decision-making. Sit down with your children and discuss the process. Regardless of their age, begin using this process (or one you devise) for all sorts of decisions—from what to eat and wear today to vacation planning.

If they practice this method for everyday life decisions, your children will become accustomed to it and apply it more readily to career and school decision-making. They will learn to apply logic, identify preferences, gather facts, focus on outcomes, evaluate factors and ultimately make important decisions.

Once you and your teens are ready, begin putting the process into action on career exploration.

### **Career Decision-Making Process**

*Here's an overview of the whole process. You can help your children complete each of the steps.*

#### **Step 1 — Choose a Goal**

- Identify three different broad career fields, such as Medicine, Teaching and Information Technology.

#### **Step 2 — Explore Options**

- Take interest tests.
- Explore a wide range of occupations in a variety of fields.

#### **Step 3 — Identify Alternatives**

- Narrow your children's focus to a reasonable number of occupations.
- Research each of them in depth.

#### **Step 4 — Weigh Alternatives**

- Analyze each option and compare the associated facts, including possible pros and cons and overall impact on life and lifestyle.

#### **Step 5 — Make a Choice**

- Decide on one option that best fits goals and has the best impact on life.

**Step 6 – Create an Action Plan**

- Outline the activities necessary to achieve employment in the career path chosen, including the training needed, connections to make with industry professionals, etc.
- Develop a timetable to complete them.

**Step 7 – Execute the Plan**

- Actively bring the plan into reality.
- Set a timeline and follow it.
- Ask oneself every day, “What can I do today to get closer to my goal of landing the career I want?” Whatever the answer is to that question – do it.

**Step 8 – Review and Revise**

- Evaluate the progress and outcomes of the decision and the Action Plan. “How close am I to my goal in comparison to where I wanted to be at this point?”
- Revise steps or timeline as circumstances may change.